

FOSAF CHAIRMAN'S 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Several years have flashed by and for a range of reasons FOSAF has been unable to hold a full face to face AGM. Once again it is my duty and privilege to report to FOSAF's members, leadership, partners and stakeholders. This report will endeavour to summarise the Federation's various activities, challenges and achievements during the last years. It will be useful to follow our adopted strategic framework's format.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The State:

Having achieved a positive outcome in the litigation with DFFE, on behalf of the entire Federation, it is important to recognise our legal team who went the extra mile and who acted on a pro bono basis for FOSAF. Alistair Franklin SC, Julian Joyner (his junior) and Julian Bartlett (our attorney), comprised a formidable team that saw the matter through, all the way to the Constitutional Court. For these sterling efforts, their staying power and commitment, all fly anglers (and not just FOSAF members) should be truly appreciative. As I had emphasised, the case was not simply about trout, but much more importantly, it revolved around the public's right to be meaningfully informed when being engaged by the state in consultation processes.

Since then the Ministerial task team on the management of trout was established comprising officials from the DFFE and representatives of Aquaculture SA and the Trout SA components (which include your Chairperson). Despite the long delays in the process some occasioned by the Covid 19 lockdown, slow but steady progress is being made and a breakthrough was made at a face to face meeting in Cape Town in 2024 when broad consensus was reached to use the maps developed during the 2014 to 2017 mapping exercise. We have been heartened by the change in approach from the DFFE who have shown a willingness to engage in good faith. While some naysayers regarded the mapping exercise as a waste of time and money, Trout SA and FOSAF's insistence on capturing and saving the underlying GIS data that informed the exercise, helped to develop of a useful mapping tool. The fact that we were able to retain control of this data, by backing up our own copies of the information that informed and mirrored the maps being produced by SANBI, meant we were able to access our own reliable data against which to assess and compare subsequent versions. In fact the SANBI maps were subsequently lost and our data proved vital in facilitating the resuscitation of the process. Special mention must be made of the late Gerrie van der Merwe who championed this endeavour and without whose efforts, foresight and resourcefulness this ongoing process may well have collapsed.

Fortunately, Richard Viljoen, the person entrusted with custodianship of the mapping data, had carefully saved this important information. We are also most grateful to Richard, as he was able to make this data available to the DFFE for verification and checking. We will continue to push this process forward in line with our practical and policy driven approach.

I must again express our massive gratitude to all those people and organisations who kindly and thanklessly invested thousands of hours and donations to support the trout value chain. In particular, the Northern Trout Association must be mentioned, as it has played vital role in raising funding for these activities. We will continue to keep you informed about our progress in this important process.

The Aquaculture Development Bill thankfully remains in limbo for the time being. It was removed from the parliamentary process and as far as we have been able to ascertain, it is the subject of some further ongoing consultation.

The Wild Capture Freshwater Policy was approved by Cabinet and gazetted. The next phase involves the implementation of the policy. This has been an ongoing process with further consultations taking place at provincial level and at a National task team (soon to be a National Working Group). Your chairperson has participated, when and if available, to try and ensure that FOSAF's practical sustainable use approach is fostered so that the policy implementation takes account of social, economic and environmental priorities and remains cost effective and incentivises compliance rather than the kind of heavy handed command control approach adopted to date.

Public:

FOSAF has continued to attempt to promote its activities as widely as possible over the past few years.

Peter Arderne's amazing commitment together with the help our webmaster Andrew Vester and Peter's nationwide team of local/regional reporters, continue to ensure that FOSAF keeps up its visibility on social media and that our website remains up to date. we are grateful to Peter and his team for helping ensure that our work and profile gets the prominence it deserves. Peter is not getting any younger and FOSAF must develop a vital succession plan to relieve him of some of the burden this massive set of tasks has entailed. This will be a priority going forward. It is also important to appreciate Vicky's support for Peter in all he does for FOSAF.

Chris William's who heads up our Northern region continues his work on behalf of FOSAF and SAVE, some other organisations, together with a broad spectrum of local stakeholders to address the many pollution incidents taking place on the Vaal system. Chris keeps the EXCO updated on a regular basis on developments in this regard.

As I have noted in prior years, it is the unsung efforts of many ordinary anglers and flyfishers out there, as well as other citizens in action, who make a difference and whose efforts continue to ensure some level of accountability from government for the manifest failures we are having to witness, especially at municipal level. That ordinary active citizens must shoulder the burden of addressing these wide range of community based issues like pollution incidents, sewerage spills and sanitation failures, leaves much to be desired. The ongoing community programmes like river health and litter clean ups, fishing and education programs especially for young people, various research initiatives (citizen science) and broader riparian zone clean up initiatives, must all be congratulated for making a massive difference and showing the state what is possible if all of us can and do work together.

In KZN the NFFC have continued the work with the amaHlubi Community to provide excellent fishing for its members and the public on started by the Bushman's River. The club's river clean-up programmes and leveraged sponsorship have benefitted many young learners in the area and visiting fly anglers ensure a useful source of income for the community. Other clubs in other regions have considered replicating this approach.

These are the kinds of activities and endeavours that showcase FOSAF's ethos, values, approach and spirit. This is what can be used to encourage the youth and other newcomers to our sport.

FOSAF remains a committed member of Trout SA and through this also is part of Aquaculture SA. In this capacity we have contributed to strategy and policy frameworks providing useful insights and approaches to addressing national policy that appears to be focused on control and co-option as opposed to development of the broader economy and social justice issues affecting many South Africans. As I have reiterated on many occasions our participation in these structures facilitates entrée to a range of national commodity based and business formations like AGRI SA and BUSA for FOSAF which amplifies our voice considerably. As noted in previous years, FOSAF's ethical and policy driven approach and thinking is often valued and endorsed by many of the stakeholders we engage with.

Anglers:

South Africa has had a rich tradition of flyfishing publications. The Mission remains excellent publication that continues to offer us its support. Many thanks to Tudor Caradoc-Davies and his band of merry pranksters for keeping this innovative gem alive. The Complete Fly Fisherman is another long standing flyfishing publication that has a wide following. We value their contribution to our sport.

The many flyfishing talk/chat groups and forums have also been valuable. Many clubs have websites and added to these are the international publications that offer so many videos, articles, and stories covering every aspect of flyfishing from travel and hospitality, to equipment and clothing, to fly dressing and angling tips and lessons. I doubt that learning every aspect of our gentle art has ever been this accessible. We will continue to put out the Tippet which has continued to be an essential and respected mouthpiece for FOSAF.

FOSAF continues to network and engage with SACRAA and the competitive fly anglers SAFFA as well as other angling bodies where required. Despite some differences in approach, we are heartened by the positive energy and goodwill that permeates our interactions and joint endeavours and their mutual support and respect is much appreciated. It is critical that we continue to work together for the benefit of those we serve and the ecosystems we all depend upon.

INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Secretariat

The FOSAF secretariat has been ably assumed by Bronwyn Konigkramer and the finances have been managed by James Waugh. Regular AFS and management accounts and careful monitoring of our membership reflect a job well done by them both.

EXCO

We have had a number of virtual meetings and calls during the last year. These new platforms developed during the Covid 19 crisis, have served us well and provide a useful and cost-effective meeting option. We all continue to remain in regular email contact and in addition, a WhatsApp group chat has also proved invaluable in maintaining communications. I also continue to regularly speak with chapter Chairperson's and other EXCO members telephonically when necessary to ensure we all stay in touch and up to date with current matters of interest and concern.

Regions

The Region Chairperson's have provided reports. I will thus not steal their thunder by repeating aspects in this report. The Regional Committees under the able leadership of Brian Clark, Jim Read, Leonard Flemming (and now David Karpul) and Chris Williams respectively. Our Regions have remained in reasonable shape with some decline in membership evident. Many clubs have also reported reduced membership. Hopefully this downward trend can be averted by instilling renewed interest in our activities in the years ahead.

Dr. Tom Sutcliffe, our President and one of South Africa's most influential freshwater fly anglers, died peacefully on 8 April 2024 in the presence of his family. He was a founding member of FOSAF and contributed enormously to its development and almost every facet

of flyfishing in SA. His memorial service held on 18 April 2024 at St Andrews Church Newlands was moving and memorable occasion which can be viewed on YouTube. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-s7mkHzeMZI>).

Communications and Marketing

Our lack of success despite our efforts at marketing FOSAF remains extremely puzzling. I struggle to understand that that many fly anglers fail to see FOSAF's value proposition.

In as much as one appreciates that the younger generations have adopted differing priorities and approaches to social media and access to information, I remain hopeful that in the year ahead a new and younger group of anglers can take up the baton and find a way to make FOSAF more appealing to other flyanglers. I invite any of our members to come forward and volunteer themselves for this important task.

CONCLUSION

This year's AGM will be a round-robin email experience. This is a novel approach to our current predicament of needing to combine governance with accessibility, practicality and convenience. This means that all relevant documentation will be emailed for comment and adoption to all members. Any relevant comments received will be considered and debated as may be required. Thereafter these will be circulated.

It remains important to bring FOSAF and its activities closer to our members and regions and new people there. Hopefully we will also get to wet a line in these places by doing this as well. We are hoping to hold the next AGM on a face to face basis in the Cape.

Our thanks are due to James Waugh and his team at Accountuit Cape Town (Pty) Ltd for efficiently attending to the necessary and producing readable AFS and regular management accounts.

My sincere thanks and appreciation go to Bronwyn and Jim for their regular support and the rest of the EXCO for support and commitment in keeping FOSAF alive in the regions.

May flyfishing continue to grow from strength to strength in Southern Africa.

Many thanks

Ilan Lax
FOSAF Chairperson
2024